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Will Gen. Taylor The Shots for Ken

By PETER LISAGOR

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WASHINGTON — Despite official disclaimers, Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor's new role in the Kennedy administration is expected to be as powerful and pervasive as the force of his personality and logic permits.

As military representative of the President, with an office in the White House, the 60-year-old former Army chief of staff will act as a coordinator of military and intelligence activities of the government.

The White House announcement of Taylor's recall to active service said, in obvious anticipation of criticism, that he "will not be interposed between the President and his statutory advisers or advisory bodies such as the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff or the National Security Council."

In the next sentence, however, the announcement came closer to what veteran observers believe to be the number of his potentially great influence.

"But he will maintain close liaison with them and give his personal views to assist the President in reaching decisions."

There is no substitute in this town for having the ear of the President, the kind of easy access to his Oval Room office that only a member of his personal staff can have.

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Likes Detached Advice

IT SUITS President Kennedy's style to have men around him without fixed assignments, informed men with independent judgments who have no vested interest in the various departments and agencies and can advise him with detachment.

In such a setup, the strong and clear-minded survive, while those with lesser talent find themselves elbowed aside, with diminished influence.

Thus it is that MacGeorge Bundy, the former Harvard dean and special assist-



Taylor and New Boss

... he'll advise President

ant on national security affairs, has emerged as an influential, perhaps the most influential, member of the President's staff.

Taylor's mandate would appear to spill over into Bundy's domain, and many observers believe he will inevitably compete with Bundy for influence, not as a personal desire but in the nature of the White House operation.

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Called Last April

TAYLOR, a man of many attainments, was called to Washington in the wake of the Cuban invasion fiasco last April, to review U.S. intelligence operations. He had been president of the Lincoln Center for Performing Arts in New York City.

The President is known to have been disappointed in the fact that no one of-

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ficial was available to ride herd on the detailed plans developed for the Cuban misadventure, to serve as a checkpoint for the military as well as intelligence judgments.

He also is understood to have felt that the Joint Chiefs of Staff performed inadequately in the Cuban episode in approving plans developed by the Central Intelligence Agency, whose own role was deemed faulty.

This is the background of Taylor's appointment. The President simply wanted an experienced military officer, with the intellectual breadth to cope with other aspects of the world struggle. He wanted him close at hand as an adviser, expeditor, reviewer and liaison man.

Similar to Leahy?

ADMINISTRATION sources insist that Taylor's post is not quite comparable to that played by Fleet Adm. William Leahy, who served both Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman as a personal chief of staff.

They say that in Leahy's time there was no chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as there is today, and that Leahy in practice was the chairman.

But the fact is that Leahy worked out of the White House, as Taylor will, and that his functions were those the President assigned him, as Taylor's are likely to be.

Leahy's relationship with the Chief Executive was summed up in his memoirs, "I Was There," in which he told of his first visit to Mr. Truman in the White House after President Roosevelt's death.

He told Mr. Truman that his job, which Mr. Roosevelt had created, was "an intimate one." He suggested that Mr. Truman let him go and get someone he knew.

Mr. Truman declined, saying he needed Leahy.

Leahy then said that he had frankly told Mr. Roosevelt when he disagreed with him, and that FDR liked to do business that way. If he was to stay on, Leahy said, he couldn't change.

"If I think you are in error, I shall say so."

Whereupon, Mr. Truman said that "that is exactly what I want you to do."

"I want you to tell me if you think I am making a mistake. Of course, I will make the decisions, and after a decision is made, I will expect you to be loyal."

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Depends on Kennedy

PRESIDENT KENNEDY, a student of the presidency before he took office, is probably aware of that bit of history. And so probably is Taylor.

The handsome, erect general, who retired earlier than he might have as a result of difference within the Eisenhower administration, is an ardent advocate of conventional forces as an essential in fighting limited wars.

What he makes of his new White House post, which he will assume July 1, will depend, of course, upon President Kennedy's wishes, in the last analysis.

But since the President likes advisers of vigor and decisive judgments, he can conceivably cut quite a wide swath in top councils of the government.